

BUSINESS SCENE

• By GREER TAY CASHMAN



DUN & BRADSTREET Israel CEO Reuven Kovent (from right), America Israel Friendship League vice president Charlotte Frank, AIFL president Kenneth Bialik, New York Stock Exchange president Duncan Niederauer, Israel-America Chamber of Commerce chairman Chemi Peres and the AIFL's Howard Marcolis take part in the traditional bell ceremony to open trading on Israel Day at the NYSE last Monday. (Shahar Azran)

THERE WERE no miracles on the New York Stock Exchange on December 1, but there was something to gladden the hearts of visiting Israelis. It was a "blue and white" day at the NYSE with Israel's flag prominently displayed. As part of the Israel Day festivities, a delegation of Israeli business executives took part in the traditional bell ceremony to open trading. The delegation was led by **Chemi Peres**, chairman of the Israel-America Chamber of Commerce; former ambassador to the UN **Dan Gillerman**, who was recently elected chairman of the America Israel Friendship League; and **Reuven Kovent**, CEO of Dun & Bradstreet Israel. Other members of the delegation were **Moshe Gaon**, **Avihu Ben-Nun**, **Buki Oren**, **Nir Lampert**, **Gad Ze'evi**, IACC CEO **Tamar Guy** and several other leading figures from Israel's business community.

From the stock exchange the Israelis continued to Ground Zero, the scene of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in which so many people, including some of their former American colleagues, lost their lives. They concluded the day at the Plaza, where they joined their American friends at the AIFL's annual gala dinner.

From New York, the delegation headed to Washington, DC, to participate in a conference dedicated to 60 years of business cooperation between the US and Israel. The event was attended by senior US government officials, Ambassador to the US **Sallai Meridor** and several Israelis who in past years served as senior representatives of Israel in the US and/or as leading figures in the Finance Ministry and the Trade and Industry Ministry.

WHEN ANYONE describes **Gad Propper** as a man of the world, they are absolutely correct. Inter alia, Propper is the honorary consul for New Zealand, in which capacity he shows up at most of the functions organized by the Israel Australia New

Zealand and Oceania Chamber of Commerce. He is expected to attend its Trade Awards ceremony this Thursday, along with National Infrastructures Minister **Binyamin Ben-Eliezer** and Australian Ambassador **James Larsen**.

In his capacity as a director, CEO and one of the main shareholders of **Osem International**, Propper comes into contact with dignitaries from all the countries to which Osem exports. He is the founding chairman of the Israel-EU Chamber of Commerce, established two-and-a-half years ago; he has been awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) for his contribution to trade relations between Israel and Britain.

Last week, in his capacity as chairman of **L'Oreal Israel**, Propper was awarded the French Legion d'honneur at a ceremony at the residence of French Ambassador **Jean Michel Casa**. The award was in recognition of Propper's contribution to the global success story of the worldfamous cosmetics company, which is headquartered in France. Initially, Propper's Interbeauty Company was the Israel importer distributor for L'Oreal, but in 1994, the French cosmetics giant bought a 30 percent stake in Interbeauty, which led to the creation of L'Oreal Israel.

ANOTHER RECIPIENT of French honors was **Nanny Seyman**, an importer of French gourmet foods that enable Israelis to have a taste of France without having to travel there. At the ceremony at which she received her medal and citation from Casa, Seyman noted that when she married her husband, she also married French culture, and their three daughters were each given French names.

MOTOROLA PRESIDENT and CEO **Elisha Yanal** was scheduled to receive a Life Achievement Award from Ben-Eliezer and the Association of Electrical and Electronic Engineers in Israel at the Electricity 2008 Con-

vention in Eilat last week. He did receive the award in the presence of 1,500 convention participants, but Ben-Eliezer missed the event because of the technical glitch in the Labor primaries. The breakdown of the computers forced a two-day delay of the elections, preventing Ben-Eliezer from taking the trip down south.

RECENTLY APPOINTED as deputy head of marketing for the **NewPharm** chain, **Eitan Sasson**, 40, will oversee the marketing efforts of all 57 stores in the chain and will also be involved in determining marketing policy. The aim is to make prices as attractive as possible, to turn **NewPharm**, which is part of the **Hamashbir Letzarchan Group** headed by **Rami Shavit**, into Israel's most popular chain of drugstores. Sasson will also be in charge of advertising and other forms of sales promotion. His previous position at **NewPharm** was deputy head of sales.

FOLLOWING THE early retirement of **Dr. Dorit Maoz** as head of the Health Ministry's **Tirat Carmel Mental Health Center**, **Nitza Riklin**, a Hebrew University-trained psychologist who has worked at **Tirat Carmel** for 13 years, has been appointed to take her place. Riklin adapted and developed a type of "wilderness therapy" that has proved helpful in the treatment of troubled youth abroad. She has applied it with significant success on **Haifa** teenagers whose problems were expressed in violent behavior. **Tirat Carmel** treats youngsters aged six to 18.

IT LOOKS like business as usual for **Agritech 2009**. Global economic downturns notwithstanding, 22 companies have already signed up, even though the event is still almost half a year away. **Agritech** CEO **Danny Meiri** says that so far, there are no indications that the crisis will impinge on the fair, which each year attracts several thousand visitors and exhibitors from more than 100 countries. According to Meiri, the majority of the exhibitors so far are interested in water management and irrigation. With dry spells in many parts of the world, water is becoming an increasingly important subject at international conferences and exhibitions. President **Shimon Peres** strongly believes that Israel's expertise in desalination, irrigation and other areas of water-related research will lead to new industries that will be the salvation of Israel's economy.

PESSIMISTIC FORECASTS with regard to Israel's flower exports to Europe for Christmas were apparently premature. In recent days there has been a flurry of orders, indicating that exports for Christmas may equal those of last year and reach NIS 200 million, which represents roughly 20% of total flower exports per year. **Flower Growers Association** secretary **Haim Hadar** says taking all factors into account, the outlook for Christmas is rosy.